846 853 As regards *the child*, the umbilical cord is anointed every day ; he begins to take the breast and drink the "*milombyana*," the great medicine which we shall describe later on.

During these days many taboos must be observed :

The *husband* is not allowed to enter the hut on any pretext ; this is not on account of his being unclean, quite the contrary. A birth does not contaminate the father amongst the Ba-Thonga as it does in other tribes. He is not obliged to undergo any medication. His exclusion from the conjugal hut is due entirely to the fact that his wife is polluted by the blood of the lochia, and he would run the greatest danger to himself if he came near.

846 854 *All married people* are also excluded (bakhili) viz. all those who have regular sexual intercourse. Should they touch the child, he would die. If however a woman wishes very much to go and see the new-born, she must abstain from relations with her husband during two days. Then she can be admitted into the hut. On the other hand young girls are welcome in the hut, but they must not kiss the baby during these first days. "It is not yet firm ; it is only water," as they say ; later on, when it begins to laugh and to play, they may kiss it. Even the father may do so then ; when he comes back from a journey, he holds it in his arms and kisses it on the temple. Supposing that the 846 umbilical cord has now fallen off normally, the confinement period will be at an end. This termination is marked by two rites.

The mother of the delivered woman will have *to smear with clay the floor of the hut.* This is the great cleansing act which brings to an end a marginal period. It takes away all the dangerous blood, and the husband as well as all the other dwellers in the village will be allowed to enter the hut.

846 751 278 825 The second act is *the rite of the broken pot* (ku tjibelela shirengelen, viz. to make fire under the shirengele, the bit of broken pot used for the purpose). This is a medical treatment and a religious ceremony combined. It is performed by the family doctor on the threshold of the hut in the following way : he puts into this piece of broken pottery pieces of skin of all the beasts of the bush : antelopes, wild cats, elephants, hippopotami, rats, civet cats, hyenas, elands and snakes of dangerous kinds, and roasts

1: Junod M-5 (1895-190[illegible]927 Thonga

846 851 603 For any subsequent children, the feast will be reduced to the presentation by the grandmother of a basket of food to "*tlangela ñwana*," viz. to "celebrate the child."

III. *The Nursing Period.*

853 The little child has been taken out of the confinement hut (*humesha busahanen*). He is now allowed to go outside. The nursing period then begins and will last two and a half or three years; but before we study the rites which mark it, let us consider the manner in which the baby is carried and his diet during this period.

A South-African woman with her child in the ntehe.

1) The Ntehe.

854 A little child is not carried by his mother in her arms, but in a softened skin which is called *ntehe*. The preparation of the ntehe is subject to many prescribed customs.

The first of these is this: the ntehe must not be looked out before the birth of the child, or it would bring misfortune. This is a taboo which I might call a "taboo of prevision." Some other taboos of this kind are met with in our tribe.

[604] For a first-born child the skin must be provided by the maternal uncle. This is a rule, but the custom is not tabooed (1). The father may also prepare it, if necessary.

825 854 That is taboo. Let them take the skin of a duiker (blue antelope), of a goat or of a mhala (impala). Sheep skins are

(1) Though the term taboo generally means a prohibition, I take the liberty of using it in a positive sense: A custom is taboo or is tabooed when its transgression is a taboo.

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only employed when three or four children have died in previous years and the mother is in the state of destitution called *buwumba*. (Chap. II.)

The ntehe is arranged in such a way that the legs of the animal are used as straps, the forelegs are tied around the neck, the hindlegs around the waist and the child is in that way held well against his mother's shoulders. He can either show his head outside his ntehe or be entirely covered by it. This way of carrying babies is very convenient : mother and child get so accustomed to it that a baby, when you lift it, stretches out its legs at once at right angles with its body in order to sit on its mother's back ; and the mother can easily do all her work, even till her fields with the baby on her back in its ntehe !

2) The diet during the nursing period.

The child is nursed by the mother. He is allowed to take the breast at any time. There is nothing like a diet regulation amongst Natives and they would deem it cruelty to refuse the breast to a crying child.

There are some customs relating to the *milk*. When a mother has to leave her child for a short time, she squeezes a few drops of [illegible] milk on his neck in order to prevent him feeling thirsty. When she has been absent for more than one day (this can only happen when the child is able to eat some solid food) and returns home, before nursing the child again she heats a bit of broken pot in the fire and squeezes into it a little milk from each breast. The liquid evaporates. The reason of the custom is this : the mother's milk has grown cold ; it must be warmed again ; otherwise the child will be constipated. This is a taboo (1). When a baby bites the teat, it is regarded as naughtiness and the mother scratches its forehead as a punishment.

Mothers not having enough milk use a kind of shrub called

(1) Compare with the Zulu milk charms described by D. Kidd, *Savage Childhood*, page 38.

853 824 *neta* as a medecine. The shrub, which is an Euphorbiacea, contains milky sap. It is a treatment based on the principle : Similia similibus curantur.

751 278 763 864 The Thongas believe that milk alone would never suffice to make a child grow : *Ñwana a kula hi miri, the child grows by medicine*, such is the adage which is universally met with. When you see a woman carrying a child on her back, you will notice hanging to the *ntehe* the reed (lihlanga) containing the black powder which protects against the dangers of the bush, and a little calabash half filled with water. This water is not pure water, it is the medicine called *milombyana*. This word is the plural and diminutive form of *nombo*, which means baby's ailment. There is a great *nombo*, convulsions, also called *tilo*, heaven, because this complaint is brought into a mysterious connection with the influence of Heaven (See Part VI). There is a small *nombo* ; this is the infantile diarrhea which so often troubles little children ; but both diseases are supposed to be caused by the *nyoka*, the intestinal parasite, the worm or snake (nyoka means both) which is in every child and must always be combated because, if unchecked, it will pass from the bowels to the stomach ; it will come and beat the fontanella (1) and will finally penetrate the chest. Then the little one will turn up his eyes, be seized by convulsions and die. Happily there are some drugs which have a wonderful effect on this dangerous guest ! One of my neighbours, who was a convert in Rikatla, gave me their names. The first is a very common Protacea (?) with large husks called the Dlanyoka, "the one which kills worms." Mixed with the roots of a Leguminacea called *Ñwamahlanga* and with two other plants found near the sea, it forces the worm to keep quiet. These drugs are boiled and the decoction is carefully poured into a special little pot called *hlembetwana ya milombyana* which will be kept in the hut. Every morning the mother will warm the pot a little, pour some of its contents into a shell of sala and give the child a

278 751 757 854

757 826 (1) Tjaka-tjaka, the fontanella, plays a great part in the diagnosis of children's diseases and they often cover it with black wax. When the child hiccoughs, his mother or somebody else will blow on the fontanella to prevent vomiting. This will "make his heart stand" (yimisa mbilu).

856 mouthful to drink, then dip her finger into the medecine and let
731 two or three drops fall from it on the fontanella ; then she spits on
757 the lower part of the shell and presses it all along the sternum
854 of the baby as far as the navel. This is said to "nurse the child, to make him grow." Should he be sick, this treatment will be repeated many times a day. If he is well and goes about with his mother, she will pour the *milombyana* into the small calabash and give him a few sups from it from time to time.

The child must never drink ordinary water, but only the
853 *milombyana* decoction. It is a taboo. Should the mother travel
271 far from home and leave behind her the *milombyana* pot, she is
284 allowed to add some water to the calabash, but she must always leave a little of the decoction in the calabash before doing so. The mother herself is not allowed to drink the water of another country. She must only drink water from home and, if she is forced to travel, she must take a little powder from the reed each time she drinks, so that the child may become familiarised with that country (1). These laws must be kept during all the nursing period.

862 The child begins to eat *solid food* as soon as his teeth are cut, and when he is able to take it with his own hands. But some people do not like to give it to him too soon, as they say his stools become fetid. When later on he is able to go outside and to take care of himself, then he can eat any ordinary food.

853 If the mother dies during the nursing period, the little one is almost sure to follow her. The baby is fed with goat's or cow's milk, but the Natives do not know that they must add water to it ; sooner or later therefore the child dies of enteritis.

I have heard of some cases in which another woman has taken charge of the child, nursed him with her own milk and weaned him successfully ; her own child being older, she weaned him earlier than the usual time and nursed the other child in his

261 (1) A similar custom is observed in the case of moving from one country to another.
284 When a Ronga comes back from Kimberley having found a wife there, both bring with them a little of the earth of the place they are leaving, and the woman must eat a little of it every day in her porridge in order to accustom herself to her new abode. This earth provides the transition between the two domiciles !

821 "Kengelekezeeeee!" and this exclamation is repeated from one village to another. *Kenge* is the descriptive adverb which means the form of the crescent of the moon. Each "moon," or month, is considered as being a new one, the old one having died, and there were special names for each month of the year (See Part VI).

[841] 856 828 821 832 As soon as the mother of the child has resumed her menses (the menses are called tinwheti, months) and this happens as a rule on the third month after the delivery amongst Thonga women, she takes her garments, washes them, puts on new clothing and then proceeds to the ceremony of the *yandla*. The child must be "given his month." This is done in the following way. The day the new moon appears, the mother takes with her a torch or merely a brand from the fire and the grandmother follows her carrying the child : both go to the ash-heap behind the hut. There the mother throws the burning stick towards the moon and the grandmother flings the child into the air saying : "This is your moon!" (hweti ya ku hi yoleyo) : then she puts the child on to the ashes. The little one cries and rolls over in the dirt on the ash-heap. Then his mother snatches him up (wutla), nurses him, and they go home.

This ceremony, which is certainly a rite of passage, is said to "open the chest of the child" otherwise "his ears would die," he would remain stupid. When a child is not intelligent, it is usual to say to him : You have not been shown your moon! (1)

852 846 834 Therefore the *yandla* means a progress made by the child, the entrance into a new phase of his existence. The fact is emphasised by the three following changes which take place on the day of the yandla : 1) Henceforth his father is allowed to take the child in his arms. Up to that day, this was taboo, as the child being continually with his mother was perhaps polluted by the dangerous blood following the birth ; but now she has washed her clothing and has been purified by the reappearance of the menses ; so the danger no longer exists. 2) It is now

(1) However the name of the child's month is soon forgotten and is never afterwards recalled. This seems to show that the custom is dying out, as well as the knowledge of the names of the various months.

852 [854] permissible to push him gently by his elbows and 3) to sing him songs to console him (khongota) when he cries. This was taboo before the presentation to the moon.

There is another custom which seems to be confounded sometimes with the yandla. It is also performed for small children and is called : *kulakulisa*. When a friend of the family passes through the village coming from afar, from Johannesburg for instance, he takes the new-born child in his arms, throws him up and says : "Kula-kula-kula, u ya tlhasa Johan." (Grow, grow, grow and reach Johannesburg.) This is a minor custom (nau nyana) ; it is more or less play and is not tabooed like the yandla.

854 278 751 852 After the yandla, a new therapeutic agent is added to the decoction of milombyana, the *biyeketa*. *Ku biyeketa* means : "to put inside an enclosure." Twice a month during the afternoon, when the moon is new and when it is full, the family doctor goes to the kraal of the baby, he lights a fire before the door of the hut and cooks his medicines with water in a pot till they boil. Then he draws the embers to one side of the pot and lays on them a big pill, a *mhula*. The *mhula* is made of fat from an ox paunch or from a goat's paunch mixed with medicinal powder. Then he places a mat on end so as to make a small round enclosure : mother and baby enter it, and he covers them with a piece of cotton cloth. They expose themselves to the steam which comes from the pot and to the smoke which emanates from the mhula. When both have copiously perspired and the emanation has come to an end, the mother tells the doctor to uncover them, and they emerge from the vapour bath. Then the doctor cuts both of them with a razor on the forehead, on the sternum, on the spine between the shoulders, on the elbow, on the wrist, on the knees and introduces a little of his medicinal powder into the small wounds. The pot with the hot decoction is then taken by the doctor behind the hut, the mother accompanying him. She pours a little of the water into his hands : he spits into it, uttering the sound *tsu* (which is the sacramental act in ordinary worship) and throws it on the child. The mother rubs the whole body of the little one with it ; in the meantime the doctor prays to his gods, viz. the spirits of his ancestors. Begining with the formula of invocation which doctors

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852 834 731 always use, he says: "Abutayi, akhwari! This is the child! May he grow! May he become a man by means of this medicine of mine! May his perspiration be good; may the impurity go away; may it go to Shiburi, to Nkhabelane! (1) May the child play well, be like his companions. This is not my first attempt! You have given me these drugs; may they protect him against disease so that nobody may say there is no power in them; etc." After this prayer the doctor takes the little child and goes back to the central place of the village. The mother stays and washes her own body with the decoction, praying also to her gods (but without the *tau*, as this has been uttered by the "master of the drugs").

751 854 177 757 The treatment of the biyeketa is also called "hungulo dja milombo," "the vapour bath for infantile diseases;" it is not a curative, but a preventive; it aims at ascertaining if the child is all right. If he has bad stools (a nga tlambi psinene) the mother will perhaps remember that she has forgotten to enclose him and she will call the doctor in at once. Should he fall sick, the biyeketa will not be performed again but the milombyana will be administered more frequently. However, it is of importance for the growth of the child. To neglect it is taboo! (2)

757 854 As for the cuts, sometimes they are followed by a second vapour bath, as if the doctor wished to cause the medicine contained in the smoke to penetrate through them into the body, in which case he will only "close" them later on by introducing a healing powder into them. Children generally cry when they see the physician... They dread the pain of the cuts. When the mother goes to the doctor's village, she takes with her the wood, the mat and a pot of beer or a fowl in payment. The physician's charge for a biyeketa is sixpence to one shilling or a hen or a pot of beer.

(1) Viz. to the end of the world. Those clans are far away to the north, outside the Ronga country.

(2) I hear that the converts generally have not abandoned the biyeketa, but they do not allow the doctor to perform the sacrificial act and to pray to the spirits. Sam Ngwetsa, the children's physician of Rikatla used to pray thus: "O Father of mercy! I pray thee! I do not pray the dead but thee only who art in heaven! Grant us to see this child in good health, standing firm, this little bush!"

5) The tying of the cotton string.

854 When the child "tiyelanyana" viz. "becomes a little firm,"
857 the mother, having to plough her fields and to cook the food, begins to seat him on the sandy soil, after having made a kind of hole of about five inches in depth. We have seen Thonga babies already sitting at the age of two months. But this "dumping" hardly meets all the requirements, and the mother looks for a girl to help her to take care of the baby (wa ku tlanga na ye, to play with him). She puts the child in the charge of an elder sister or a cousin ; a girl of five to ten is quite strong enough for the purpose. I have often admired the patience of these miniature nurses, sometimes not very much bigger than the child they carry, with their very troublesome babies.

852 But very soon the child begins to crawl (kasa) and this is the
115 time when a very striking rite is performed. This rite seems to be practised all over the tribe, but it has more importance in the Northern clans than amongst the Ba-Ronga. I shall here give the description of Vigust, who belonged to the Tsungu clan and had emigrated to the Spelonken. My readers must forgive me if I cannot tell the story with all its details and if I am obliged to write some of them in Latin (1).

851 These are the ipsissima verba of my informant : "This is a
833 great law amongst the Thongas. When a child begins to crawl,
766 even before, the *puri* is tied round his waist. The *puri* is a
842 cotton (2) string. Father and mother fix the day ; if they forget to do so, their parents, (the grandparents) will remind them of the law. They must have sexual intercourse, but in such a way that the mother will not become pregnant, s. n. i. (Annotatio 2)[1]. The mother will have to take in her hands "their filth" (thyaka ra bona) smear the string with it and tie it round the child. It will

(1) A more complete description of this rite and of some others related to the tattoo, of the Thongas will be found in the Revue d'Ethnographie et de Sociologie, Oct. 1910, Paris.

(2) There are plants of cotton probably subspontaneous in the Low Country of the Transvaal of Delagoa Bay.

1 [See p. 516 in these categories or in 116--Analyst]

851 remain there till it falls to pieces. After this operation the
766 child is "grown up" and three things are allowed which were
833 taboo before :

1) The child, if he dies, can be buried on the hill, in dry soil. Before the *boha puri* he would have been buried in wet soil, near the river, as is customary with twins and children who have cut their upper teeth first.

2) He can participate in the strange purification called *hlamba ndjaka* which takes place after the death of one of the inhabitants of the village (See ceremonies of death).

852 3) The parents can again have conjugal intercourse, though
766 they must avoid conception till the child is weaned. Before this
833 ceremony it was absolutely prohibited, and should they have
821 sinned in this respect and the mother have conceived, they would
842 be very guilty! It is a dangerous taboo! They would have "stolen" the child, stolen it from the law (yiba nawen). The child would not have "entered the law." It would be useless to tie the string round him in order to repair the evil done. Should he live long, should he even become an old man, he will have to be buried in wet soil, otherwise the rain would be prevented from falling.

Amongst the Malulekes and the [illegible]ngwes such children are even burnt after their death. We shall speak later on about the mysterious relation established by the Thongas between these children, their burial, and the rain.

852 Amongst the Ba-Ronga this rite is called *boha nshale* (to tie
854 the cotton) and can be performed in the same way or even more simply by the father (Annotatio 3). Parents, when they have duly tied the string on the little one, are said to have *fuya nwana*, viz. taken possession of the child.

Amongst them again, another thing is then allowed which was taboo before. The child can be carried on the shoulders without ntehe by the arms alone (hi minkono).

851 It is clear that the tying of the cotton string means the official reception of the child into the family, even into human society. Before that, he was hardly considered as a human being, he was *shilo* (a thing), *khuna* (an incomplete being). Now he is *nkulu*,

2 [See p. 516 in these categories or in 116 - Analyst]

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862 join with them in blessing the little one. The beak of the sacrificed
782 hen, one of the claws and one of the feathers (psirungulo) will be
785 tied together round the child's neck. A mat is spread on the ground ; the child is laid on it and greased with oil and powder brought by the physician. Then he is smeared and rubbed with the bran. The particles which fall on the mat are called *timhore*. They are gathered by the mother who makes a ball of them. In the meantime the father looks for the nest of a certain kind of large ant which is common in the bush. It lives in the earth, but the opening of its hole is tolerably large. There the mother goes at sunset. She introduces the ball into the hole so that the ant will be obliged to take all the *timhore* into the nest. Then she returns home without looking behind her. It is taboo ; should she transgress this rule, she would bring back disease to her child.

This rite is the ordinary *hondlola rite* which is performed in this or in a similar way at the close of any serious disease as the conclusion of the treatment, with the view of taking away the defilement of disease. After having *hondlola*, the physician asks for the payment of his fees. For a child he will ask ten shillings or five coins of five hundred reis (1).

854 This hondlola reveals to us the true conception of the nursing period held by the Natives. For them these three first years of the child's life are a period of disease ; so many perils threaten the little one's well-being that he can hardly be considered healthy. He is during the whole time under the supervision of the physician, who takes leave of the little patient on the day of the weaning.

854 This view of infancy accounts also for some other taboos. It
789 is *yila* for instance to say of a child who is particularly fat : Wa tika, he is heavy : this would bring mishap to him. One must say : A kota ribye, he is like a stone! It is taboo also in Shiluvane to make use before a child of the word *mfene*, baboon. There is a disease which is called by that name and it would come upon him. One must say : the thing which inhabits the hills, and so on...

(1) In the Mpfumo clan the rite of weaning is somewhat different. I have published in " Les Ba-Ronga " a description of it given by Tobane. It seems that the elements of the cotton string rite and of the broken pot rite are mixed with the proper weaning rite. I think that the description of Mbona is more trustworthy.

766 pot is placed in the earth, the opening being half covered with a layer of ashes, in such a way that there remains a passage for the air. It is taboo to bury it otherwise; until it has passed through the rite of presentation to the moon (page 53). *An older child* is buried in the ordinary way, but with very few ceremonies. There is no religious act. The mother alone attends the funeral. The father digs the grave, but he does nothing else. He says: "We, holders of the assagai, do not bury such little ones. They are but water, they are but a womb, (nyimba) they are but a *ntehe*." 854 A father pays very little attention to little children. It is only when they begin to smile that he will show them some affection. Then it may be that he will press his little one against his breast and kiss its temple, especially when he returns home from a journey.

766 *In the case of suicide*, the corpse is buried according to ordinary rules. But the tree on which the man hanged himself is cut down. It is taboo: other people might commit suicide at the same place. Its wood is not used for fuel.

If a woman dies during pregnancy, she must be cut open to see what the sex of her child is. This must be done inside the grave, before the earth is covered in. As Mboza said: "The air (moya) must come out." He told me the story of a husband in the Mabota country who nearly fainted when obliged to perform this painful operation. But it is a great taboo, as the woman might become a god of bitterness (shikwembo sha shibiti), if buried without this precaution (See Part VI). In the Maluleke clan women who die pregnant, or in confinement, are cremated.

Lepers alone are buried in the hut. In Maputju the father and the mother are buried in front of the hut whilst the regular place in other parts of the Ronga territory is behind the hut, *mahosi*. The members of the reigning family are buried in the *ntimu*, the sacred wood which belongs to them. Every big family may have its *ntimu* and the men are buried there according to their villages; each village has its place and the place is called after the name of the headman of the village. So in the Lebombo sacred wood, there was "the village of Nkolele, to the south, the village of Shihubane, to the north, etc."

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CHAPTER II

The evolution of a woman from Birth to Death

Essay of a Ronga girl on the subject.

In July 1897, the School Inspector gave to the big girls of the Swiss Mission school at Lourenço Marques the following subject for an examination in composition: "The life of a Ronga woman." This is the translation of one of the pupils' essays on the life of their country women:

"When a girl is born amongst the Ba-Ronga, people come and congratulate the mother and say: "A ma buyeni mati," that is to say: "Let the water come!" When the time is at hand when she will come out of the hut, ochre is crushed for her and a calabash full of the fat of *nkuhlu* almond is prepared, and the two ingredients are mixed and smeared over her.

"Her curly hair is stretched out in corkscrew fashion, and ochre is put on it to transform it into a kind of rats' tails. (This is the operation called *hora ngoya*.) The mother also smears herself with ochre, and puts on her head a crown of small strings (shikupu) (1). Then, when the child lets her head fall on account of the weakness of her neck, a plaited string, which is just the right size for a necklace, is tied round her throat. 'Thus,' they say, 'her nape will be strengthened.'

"A small calabash with medicine is given her to drink; they also prepare for her a small pot of the medicine, and they say it

(1) I have heard this custom explained as follows: the mothers amuse the children by shaking their heads; the small strings dance about and make the babies laugh. This can only be true of infants already two or three months old.

854 is to lessen the dangers of growth (pumba nombo), so that the sickness should not be too bad. (These are the milombyana,

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Phot. A. Burt

Girls with babies at Makulane
(Maputju country.)

854 963 (see page 48.) After her birth she is carried in the skin of a gazelle (mhunti) which her mother ties round her neck and loins. When that skin has become too small, they get one of an antelope (mhala). She begins to walk ; when her mother sends her on an errand she is able to do it. She also begins to talk, and to know her father and mother. Then, when she has grown, they prepare for her a small pot of pounded and cooked mealies so that she may eat of it. After three years she is weaned and goes to stay for a time with her grandmother. After that she returns home.

857 868 "When she has learnt to walk, she is very fond of playing with the shells of the sala. She cooks in them. Then, when she has done with them, she takes small pots and cooks little dinners. She also gets a small calabash, she goes to the lake to draw water and, on coming back, she gives it to her father so that he may wash his face. Here she is now gathering small bits of wood ; she makes small bundles of them and brings them home. Later on she will make heavier bundles.

"When she has grown up more, she will take charge of the work of her mother. She will do the work. But if the mother sees that she cannot do it all, she will help her. It may however be said that the mother needs no longer to crush her mealies, 583 neither to go to the well nor to the fireplace. When she is quite a grown up girl, the suitors come. If they are accepted, they bring the purchase money. They buy her (lobola) and do all they like. If she is prolific, she will bear many children. Now and then she returns to her parents' village, then she comes back to her husband. Her children grow. They go to get water, to cut her wood, to plough her fields. She goes with them. When they are 462 grown up, they get married. If amongst them there is a son, he goes to buy his wife. Thus she looks for a mother-in-law for her son. He will then be truly a man because he has got a mother-in-law! When her children are married, the mother again begins to do all her work. She steeps her mealies, crushes them to make flour, she cuts her wood, cooks her beer ; she prepares the light beer ; she smears the floor of her hut ; this is what she does till she is quite old.

888 "When she is quite old, they feed her. Her grandchildren are

1 [The following page is quoted from an essay by a native girl at the Swiss Mission school at Lourenço Marques -- Analyst]

A woman who has lost many children, three or four, is considered as being in a special position, called *bowumba*, and there are many rules to be observed in order to deal with this "state of bereavement." Should a child be born after the death of many elder brothers, he must be carried in a *ntehe* made of a sheep's skin instead of an antelope or goat skin. (See p. 46.) To carry him in an ordinary ntehe is taboo. Should it be a boy, the mother will put girl's clothing on it, and vice-versa. The mother's breast will be smeared with a special medicine, because they are "breasts of the dead (mabele ya bafi)." The child, if it lives, will be weaned as early as possible and be taken to its grandmother. Two curious rites are also practised to protect it against bad luck. The first is the *kunga* ; the second, *rangela bowumba*, seems to belong rather to the Northern clans.

The *kunga* rite which we have already met many times (see p. 124) is also performed in the case of a mother who has given birth to a new child whilst in the state of bowumba. To neglect it is a taboo. The bereaved mother keeps silent before her visitors until they have deposited their gifts at her feet and have thus "opened her mouth." Old women having no means to buy a present take a bit of grass and fix it in her hair. Then she consents to speak. She gathers all the bracelets thus obtained and puts them on the ntehe, carrying them everywhere with her.

Another rite is observed in the Northern clans. The child whose elder brothers and sisters have died is taken by the mother to the village of her own parents. There it is buried in the ash-heap up to its neck. Then somebody runs to the village, takes a handful of grains of maize and throws them on the child. Afterwards it is dug up, washed, smeared with ochre and brought home. This rite is called *rangela bowumba*, viz. to *precede* bowumba, to cut it, to treat it : the bowumba will not now come as it has been "preceded". It will be deceived, it will no longer desire the baby, as the baby has been thrown away together with all the refuse of the village on to the ash-heap. It is no longer able to eat mealies, even if it is given grains of mealies ; it is dead! Let the bowumba take no notice of it! (This description of the "rangela bowumba" was given to me by an old Thonga from Spelonken. Mankhelu, my Nkuna informant, called this rite

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

854 2) *To soothe babies.* Should Mboza's son cry, his nurse will say :
551 "Miyela, Makaneta ñwa yindlu ya ntima," "Keep quiet Makaneta,
618 of the black hut." It may also happen that some one wishing to console himself in affliction will do the same. Notice these last words : "of the black hut." They mean : "You who belong to a village where the huts have had time to become black ; they have never been destroyed by enemies, as no enemy dares to attack your clan! So the roofs have blackened inside from the effects of the smoke and outside from those of the rain!" It is customary to add to the name of the ancestor words such as these, in order to flatter more highly the man you salute, or the baby you console.

551 Thus each clan has a *laudatory phrase* which is sometimes much
618 longer than the Makaneta one. Masinga is called "wa le hondjo-
576 sin," "the one who reigns over the red earth," (more fertile than the sand). The Matinanas or Ngomanes are lauded thus : "Nkandjetele wa ku woma, ku baleka minambyana" — "the one who tramples on a dry place, and rivers begin to flo[illegible] because he is so heavy, so powerful! (Compare p. 87.) A Ngomane man will address his paternal aunt with the same words, when offering her a present.

Here are some of the best known shibongo. Their meaning is sometimes unknown, as they often contain ancient and obsolete expressions :

Hoñwana : Ñwahomu ya ntima ñwa mu-Nondjwana, — The black ox of Nondjwana (or Nondwane).

Shirindja : Mudzunga ntima wa le dzungen, — Black South of the South ?

Mpfumo : Ba hlela misaba ba khabuta, — They winnow the sand ; they eat it. (The sand is so white in their country that it resembles mealies flour : they never lack food.)

Libombo : Libombo la Ndlopfu, — Elephant's face.

Nkuna : Ba homu! Ba nyari! ya makhwiri, Ñwashitjimba buraka, ba mahlwen ka ntima. — Those of the ox! Those of the buffalo, the buffalo with the large belly which rolls in the mud, the one with a black spot on the forehead!

Rikotjo : Ba Nyamasi, — Those of the nyamari tree.

Khosa : Ba ripanga ro sheka ba ntsindja, — Those of the keen